



## City of Hampton, VA Meeting Minutes City Council

22 Lincoln Street  
Hampton, VA 23669  
www.hampton.gov

*Ross A. Kearney, II*  
*Will Moffett*  
*Angela Lee Leary*  
*Molly Joseph Ward, Mayor*

*Christopher G. Stuart*  
*Donnie R. Tuck*  
*George E. Wallace*

*Staff:*  
*Mary Bunting, City Manager*  
*Cynthia Hudson, City Attorney*  
*Katherine K. Glass, CMC, Clerk of Council*

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Wednesday, May 11, 2011

6:00 PM

Council Chambers, 8th Floor, City Hall

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### **CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

### **MOLLY JOSEPH WARD PRESIDED**

**PRESENT:** Ross A. Kearney, II, Angela Lee Leary, Will Moffett, Christopher G. Stuart, Donnie R. Tuck, George E. Wallace

Mayor Ward welcomed everyone to the public comment period and asked the Clerk to call the roll.

The Mayor indicated that there are 24 citizens signed up to speak and asked that people take turns at the two different microphones to make things more efficient. Many people signed up to speak about the budget which is fine to address under public comment. At 7:00 we will also have our regular Council meeting and a public hearing on the budget. People may also speak on the budget at that time. She asked that citizens not duplicate their remarks if they want to speak about the budget more than once. Between 6:30 pm and 7:00 pm you will be able to sign up for the public hearing.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. George Baisley, 17 Michele Drive, greeted the Mayor and Council and made the following statement: I have lived there for 40 years. I've got notes today. Most of the time I just get up here and speak, but today I have some written notes so I may not miss what I got. The budget today or the new budget we've got seems like about the same old budget we had for year after year. There was no tax relief for senior citizens who earn over \$50,000.00. That's been kicked around for three years. All big people and bad people are still not being taxed on their personal property tax on their boats or RVs. I took a ride yesterday down by Quash Street and when I get there, I went on Compton Street. On the left side of Compton Street right behind that, huge car lot used to be there, there's a bunch of timber pile in there and it looks like they're running a business on Compton Street. I thought it was a residential street. I went to Quash Street. There was a young lady trying to get from one side of Quash Street to the other side of Quash Street with a stroller. There's a one foot difference between one lane of Quash Street

and the other lane of Quash Street. She said there's been work on that street. They've been working since the 4th of January, \$675,000.00 and we can't get it finished between now and the 4th of January? That's ridiculous. King Street, we're going to spend \$3 million on a half a mile of improvements on King Street, from old Fox Hill Road to, yes, my street. That's \$3 million for half a mile of highway, beautification, and they say Hampton wants to be the City that you'll feel like you're proud to live in. Now, if you live on certain streets, your street might look nice, but not Quash Street. Okay? The employee parking lot behind the bus station is being built and I checked – I called the City to find out how much it's costing to put pavement in that lot rather than asphalt, \$171,000.00 for pavement, \$40,000.00 for asphalt. The money that's the difference could have been used to help fund the bus for taking books, the book mobile. The rest of the streets in Hampton, a lot of streets in Hampton needs repair. King Street for one or that part of it. Mercury Boulevard from King Street to Mallory needs to be repaired. They repaired about 500 feet on one side. Mallory Street, which is paved to go to Buckroe Beach, coming back from Buckroe Beach, it has not been repaired. Okay? If you live on Southall Street or Chowning Road, those streets are atrocious. There's nothing but potholes from one end to the other including Ryan's Road that get you there on either one of those. I go that way to church. This City is running like a champagne budget. I have one more comment. I was up in New York on Easter break. The governor of New York has frozen the salaries of all City employees – I'm talking about basically the managers of their school system at \$185,000.00. If they got a big enough school system. If your school system is not big enough, your salary is not \$185,000.00. It might be \$140,000.00 or \$150,000.00. He's frozen their salaries.

Mr. J.R. Locke, 6 West County Street, Executive Director of Hampton University Business Incubator, greeted the Mayor and Councilmembers and made the following statement: First I'd like to say I appreciate the Council's efforts to find ways to save the City money in these tumultuous economic times. However, I would like to enlighten the Council and the citizens about how our incubator brings value to our community. Recently the City Council of Westville wanted to find ways to bring jobs to their community and what did they decide to do, build an incubator. The Hampton University Business Incubator is working with the Hampton Department of Economic Development to create a plan of success based upon the review of other successful incubators throughout the Commonwealth. Since October, the Hampton Business Incubator has created partnerships with the Small Business Administration, the Urban League of Hampton Roads, and the Peninsula Chamber of Commerce. Two capacity filled workshops over the last six months have educated small businesses on the impact of healthcare reform and the ten keys to small business success. Ladies and gentlemen, Hampton University is committed to help and develop small businesses. We have a state-of-the-art facility that's recently been upgraded with internet, Wi-Fi and a new website. Located in a designated hub and enterprise zone, small business clients are well-positioned to apply for government grants to help their businesses grow and prosper and bring jobs to disadvantaged neighborhoods. Currently our base of five companies has 37 employees. It will be shortsighted of this Council to withdraw funding from this organization. These 37 employees are taxpayers of their community. Becoming aware of Councilman Tuck's proposal yesterday, we were in contact with two of the incubator graduates, Mr. Ken Johnson of Eagle Enterprises, who cannot be here tonight, who recently signed a contract with Boeing aircraft aerospace division to distribute parts to nine Apache Attack Helicopters. Eagle is one of only two authorized distributors in the world of spare parts to the U.S. government for the use of the Apache Helicopter. Ms. Sharon Hunt, who is here tonight, has written a letter regarding her

incubator experience and in support of continued funding. Several of our clients are here tonight and if time permits, will be speaking about their experience with the University, with the Hampton University Business Incubator. In 2005, there were over 1,100 incubator programs assisting more than 27,000 start-up companies in the U.S. supporting 100,000 jobs, contributing \$7 billion to the economy. It is estimated that from every dollar of public funds invested in incubators, they return \$30.00 to the City's tax base. We hope this helps you to understand the value of the Hampton University Incubator in the City of Hampton and hopefully you will continue to support the development of small businesses and entrepreneurs in our community. Thank you.

Ms. Joan Charles, 101 Madrid Drive, made the following statement. My two-cents worth. Two cents doesn't seem like a lot, but to a taxpaying homeowner, it is the principle of the matter. Many homes have had reduced assessments which means the tax bill on them are automatically reduced. Not so in my neighborhood, no reduced assessment. There was a \$2.9 million surplus from last year that went somewhere unknown to the public. That \$2.9 million would fund a two-cent reduction in the real estate tax, nothing else is needed. I checked the video on the last budget meeting and it seems that it was implied that the budget would have to be redone to make it balance if a two-cent tax reduction were introduced, and if the budget didn't balance it would be illegal. Excuse me. How much effort would it take to move the \$2.9 million into a section that would allow a two-cent tax reduction? Hampton Code 6.12A says supplemental appropriations. If available from surplus from the previous year's operations or from planned fund balance in the current budget as adopted, the Council by resolution may make a supplemental appropriation for the year not to exceed the amount of such balance. In this computer age and with an outstanding IT department, the change can be made before June 1. Then it was argued that the \$2.9 million would only sustain the reduction for one year. That's like telling a cancer patient not to do chemo because the cancer might come back or an oil company saying, "We won't reduce gas prices because we may have to raise them again." To all incidents the reply would be, "I'll take the one-time relief." Let FY13 take care of itself. FY12 will be a welcome relief with a two-cent reduction. No tax rate is permanent. It goes up, it goes down. That's why we have annual budget sessions. These meetings are called budget hearings, but it seems you are not hearing. It's easy to see the budget is already set in stone. A courthouse will be built no matter what. Property will still be purchased no matter what. Why do you bother to have these hearings and while I'm at it, what did this City pay Mr. David Short for the old trailer park. It is listed as zero in the newspaper. Yes, right, Mr. Short gave it to the City. I graduated with him. I don't think so. I think there was a promise made that purchases of property would list the price. What happened?

Ms. Wanda Jordan-Artis, 1326 West Avenue, made the following statement: My name is Ms. Wanda Jordan-Artis and I am a small business owner. My business is Courtesy Transportation. I am a taxi cab owner. You all have just revised the taxi cab code. The taxi cab code that you all have just revised, you all have hurt the small business owners. We are not allowed to come into your City anymore. The police are chasing the cabs down, giving the taxi cabs tickets. Those tickets are \$100.00. They don't even make that much. Right now the rule that you all have, I'm a citizen of Hampton. If I decide to call North End, Porters or any other cab that I feel like to come to my house, it is against the law for them to come there. They would be ticketed to pick me up. The only cab that is authorized to come is Yellow Cab. You have taken my choice away as a citizen to choose who I want to travel with or who I want to pick up. That is not right. Also at the same time, when you made that rule about the seven-year of those vehicles, you

grandfathered only Yellow Cab, you did not ask other cab companies. You have other cab companies out there. They have been out there for many years. They have been coming to the City; have been picking up people here in the City of Hampton. It's a shame right now that they are not allowed to come here. They were not grandfathered into that new rule. We have to change our vehicles and bring them up. I have three cabs on the road right now. My vehicles look sometimes better than the ones that are traveling on the road as Yellow Cab that you have gave a certification to. My vehicles do not qualify to come here no more because my vehicle is not within the seven-year. I have a 2001. I have a 2004. My vehicles do not qualify because you have put in the seven-year law that they have to be within seven years. That means that I have to take my vehicles off the road and buy another one that has to be either 2005 or 2006 in order to qualify to get a certification here in the City of Hampton. Also I have a business in the City of Hampton as transportation for a medical service. It is at 26 West Mercury Boulevard. So now you're telling me that I can no longer bring my other half of my business to the City of Hampton, so I have to separate my business and keep my taxes in the City of Newport News to keep my employees in the City of Newport News because you have changed the rules to satisfy one cab company. The way it looks is that the City of Hampton is only catering to Yellow Cab. The other cab companies and the small business here you have hurt terribly. Also, at the same time the City of Hampton, the people of Hampton do not even realize that you have taken the choice from them on transportation because if another cab company comes into the City and picks you up or if I live in the City of Newport News and I want to come to Wal-Mart or Coliseum Mall, do you know what the police told the driver? That I will have to get out, do what I had to do and shop and come back another...

The Mayor stated she will ask the City Manager and City Attorney to get together to explain the reasons for the changes in the law.

Vice Mayor Wallace stated he and Assistant City Manager James Gray are aware of this particular situation. We've been working on this issue for a couple of weeks now and as he explained to Ms. Jordan-Artist earlier this afternoon this is an issue we are aware of and are trying to find solutions to the problem.

Mr. David Bruanbeck, 2111 East Pembroke Avenue, Apartment 4B, made the following statement: I've come to this City Council for numerous issues in the past and I'm speaking on behalf of myself tonight. I'd like to respond to the March 23rd 1:00 p.m. session concerning Hampton Roads Transit and my HandiRide issue. I feel that HandiRide did not give me the opportunity to explain my side of it because there are other sides to my issue and I would like to say something on behalf of my issue. As far as I'm concerned I never met Mr. Sullivan. He indicated that they had met with me numerous times. I'm not aware of numerous times those people I have met with. So with that being said, I have cerebral palsy, I'm 49 years old, I'm in a wheelchair and I'm disabled. I'm not a little child and when I come before anybody or speak to anybody, I would like to think that I've always conducted myself admirably, all things considered. All I'm asking the City Council to do is represent your citizens. Don't shut us out because it can cost people a lot of things in the outcome of it. All I'm asking for is please listen to your citizens when they have a complaint or concern. Thank you.

Mr. Bill Thomas, Hampton University, made the following statement: Thanks so much for taking the time to listen to folks who have concerns. I just wanted to come in to express our concerns regarding the matter with regards to the Hampton University Incubator and job creation. I moved into the intercity community about 25 years ago and the Mayor of Norfolk at that time asked me the three things that basically impacted our communities. My answer was really simple. It was jobs number one, jobs number two, and jobs number three. If we can't find ways to build jobs for not only the folks in our community – one of the better ways of increasing taxes is to increase taxpayers. Hampton University and the City of Hampton had a great partnership in doing that and we think we can even better it. As we look at our children graduating from colleges and coming out of high schools and looking at the horrendous unemployment rates in some of our communities, I think our facility and what we're doing over there at the Hampton University Incubator is what the City needs. We need to do more with that. As an example, Hampton University leads all Virginia universities in winning competitive Federal contracts. We bring that talent under Dr. William Harvey's leadership to impose that kind of thinking onto the businesses. Then you start talking about disparities and things like that. The best way to beat a disparity is to educate the population, all people, all businesses in the community, how best to go about going after Federal contracts that contribute 65% of our income in the Hampton Roads areas and how best to do that than under the leadership that Hampton has provided. We bring a holistic approach to that and a vision and a dream that is mapped by our leader, Dr. Harvey, and the things that we have done, and we wrapped that then into a role model and some type of model of success with results that we think that we can help do. So anytime that you look at trying to reduce the producers and make things – hamper them like with the taxi cab and the things that you're working on, we think that we can be a model to help people improve their livelihood and improve their vision for encapsulating what they want it to do. Lastly, looking at the kind of leadership we have and one of my greatest heroes is Martin Luther King. When Martin Luther King went to Memphis, he went there to create jobs. He went there to save jobs and improve the living conditions of people that were working, both for business, government, and themselves. He said in his last speech, a part of it, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, and all men are endowed with certain inalienable rights, which include life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." He also stated during his last day, "If a man doesn't have a job or an income, he has neither life nor liberty or the opportunity to the pursuit of happiness. He merely exists." With that we believe that we could help the City of Hampton prosper and grow their revenues by growing taxpayers. Thanks so much for you time.

Mr. A.G.Womble, 9 Charloais Run, greeted the Mayor, Vice Mayor, Councilmembers, Ms. Bunting and Ms. Hudson and made the following statement: We read in the Daily Press just yesterday that selling the Woodlands Golf Course would be presented tonight. We wanted to come and share some reasons why we feel this is not in the best interest of Hampton and our citizens. The Daily Press article indicated that the Woodlands Golf Course had a loss of approximately of \$120,000 last year. This figure included approximately \$80,000 in depreciation. This depreciation, which is not a cash outflow, should not be included to get a true figure of how well the Woodlands is doing. There are many other financial items that should also be considered. The Woodlands Golf Course under the leadership of Ms. Patty Lewis has become the number one golf course in the region with over 45,000 customers a year. A lot of these customers are coming from outside the City of Hampton. They are spending money at hotels, restaurants, and other establishments, which generates additional tax revenues, and when these revenues are taken into consideration, the Woodlands is actually making thousands of

dollars for the City. Also, thousands of dollars are raised each year for local charities with tournaments that are held at the Woodlands. Just to name a few, The Boys and Girls Club, Relay for Life, Cancer Research, the Help the Homeless, and many more. Another point, if the Woodlands were sold this year, it would only generate revenue for one budget year. The sale of the Woodlands would not help future budgets. Selling key City assets to balance a budget is not a very good budgeting procedure. However, the most important reason for not selling the Woodlands is the quality of life issue. This wonderful facility gives our citizens, young and old, male and female, thousands of hours of enjoyment each week. Several of our high school students have gone off to college winning golf scholarship as a direct result of the Woodlands, and for many of our senior citizens, the Woodlands is a major source of their exercise, fellowship and fun on a weekly basis. I would like to close with something that all City Councilmembers and all citizens of Hampton can be proud of. In the year 2015, we will be celebrating 100 years of golf at the Woodlands. It is one of the oldest golf courses in the State of Virginia. Hampton Roads re-sponsored the Woodlands history project just a few years ago, which is on display in the Woodlands clubhouse. Many of you have seen it, but if you've not, would you please come down to take a look at it. Just one historical note, one of our Hampton high school students went on to become a United States Open golf champion. He grew up learning how to play at the Woodlands. So in summary, the Woodlands is a tremendous historical asset and a treasure of our City that is bringing money into Hampton. It's raising thousands of dollars for charities. It helps our students get scholarships and is adding so much to the quality of life for thousands of our citizens. Thank you very much. Even though on a short notice, we heard about it yesterday, a lot of our supporters of Woodlands are here tonight and he asked that they be recognized.

Mr. Eddie Deerfield, 1515 Garrow Circle, greeted the Mayor, Councilmembers, Ms. Bunting and Ms. Hudson and made the following statement: After watching and attending the past three Council meetings, I have come to the conclusion there are three members of Council who do not want to lower taxes for the citizens of Hampton. We can lower the assessments for a certain element of citizens while the others make up the difference with a higher assessment. I truly believe this would definitely be made an issue come election time. It also seems that when one or two members of Council bring up issues that they are always wrong, grandstanding or have political overtones to what they have to say. Of course, it is always one of the three members who vote together that say these things. We heard it at the last meeting and this one. That is a noble effort, but the numbers don't add up or you have to come up with a figure to balance this out. I thought that was staff's job to work these dollars, to work these things out. The other answer is that the citizens do get things for the tax money, police protection and fire protection, et cetera. I think we deserve a lot more than that. Today it was stated that we have reduced the tax rate from 2006 and that the City might have to pay more when it goes to the bond market to borrow in the future. I guess this means we can never lower taxes due to the bond market issue. How about we don't go to the bond market to build the new courthouse? The only good thing I heard today is that \$250,000 would be put in the budget for another much needed disparity study to support and update the City's policy to award more contracts to minority female businesses. I thank you for that. While I am here I might as well bring up that this Council has got to find a way to be civilized with each other. Stop denigrating certain members in public. This is very discouraging when Councilmembers degrade one another in public and don't have respect for each other. This goes for the Mayor and every member of Council. Sometimes you are worse than children in the schoolyard. Think before you speak and you might not say something mean and nasty. Learn to get along with each other and

talk to each other about what you want to do. Then when you come before the public, the tone is set and we have sensible people representing us. One thing you have to realize is that you are elected to work for the people and not the other way around. Start listening to what your constituents would have to say to you. The Council has not listened to the people for a long time and now it is time to start. Thank you and I ask that these comments be put in the record in its entirety.

The Mayor asked that the audience not clap and cheer as it is very disruptive and we have 24 speakers to get through.

Ms. Linda Counts, 1812 Darville Drive, made the following statement: I'm here tonight in support of Donnie Tuck's proposal to decrease the real estate taxes by two cents. Molly Ward you made the statement that Mr. Tuck's proposal was not legal by way of the Hampton Charter and was fiscally irresponsible. Well, how fiscally responsible were you Molly Ward and this Council to spearhead the squandering of \$30 million on our new Circuit Courthouse that is supposedly in disrepair and a parking garage instead of repairing the existing courthouse. How fiscally responsible was it for this Council to squander \$200,000 of taxpayer's money for a statue commemorating the 400th birthday of the City of Hampton, to squander \$20,000 of taxpayer's money on an anniversary table to the History Museum? How fiscally responsible was it for this Council to get involved in a land deal with Tommy Thompson, selling him 3.8 acres of land in Buckroe Beach for \$435,000 which was assessed at \$1.8 million when this Council knew that the land was not zoned for development? How fiscally responsible was it for this Council to get involved in a deal with the Radisson Hotel in downtown Hampton? How fiscally responsible was it for this Council to get into the real estate business and bought up 26 properties in which approximately 19 of these properties were bought way above the assessed value? This Council has squandered \$6,273,770 for properties and the total assessed amount came to \$4,990,600. So this Council squandered \$2 million on those properties. This Council has squandered approximately \$32,655,000. How fiscally responsible was it for Mary Bunting to try and spend \$997,000 of the \$2 million surplus on a gift card program to benefit City employees at the taxpayer's expense? Maybe this Council should take a look at how fiscally irresponsible that you've been and look at the money that has been squandered that could have been put to far better use. I would like my comments be entered into the minutes in their entirety. Thank you.

Ms. Julia Templeman, Hampton Youth Commission, greeted the Mayor, Vice Mayor City Councilmembers and guests and made the following statement: This is Brian Fuller, the Vice Chair of the Hampton Youth Commission his is Brian Fuller, and we are here on behalf of the Hampton Youth Commission. The Hampton Youth Commission is the City commission run by youth in order to give youth a voice to the wide variety of issues throughout the City. On the commission, I myself have the privilege and honor of serving as the vice chair of the youth and adult relations board, which seeks to promote understanding between youth and adults in the City of Hampton. Today, we are here on behalf of the Hampton Teen Center. For fifteen years, the Hampton Youth Commission has supported the Teen Center as a place to be for all the youth of Hampton. Almost two years ago, we finally saw our dream come to life. The Teen Center directly addresses three aspects of the youth component of the community plan, but more importantly it supports the needs of the youth then and also now. While we do understand that you are faced with considerable budget constraints, the Youth Commission feels that the Teen Center should be left as is as much as possible. There has been a lot of talk about the direction in which the City will take in regards to the Teen

Center in the coming year. Since the Teen Center is the direct product of the input of the teens, we feel that it's imperative that the young people be a key component of any decision-making process regarding its future.

Mr. Brian Fuller made the following statement: The Teen Center is not only a place where teens can simply be themselves. It is also a place where they find new ways to express their creativity and offer meaningful input at the Teen Center and in the community. It is also a place to work out and get academic support. In addition, many community organizations use the Teen Center as the place in Hampton to hold their youth events. Most importantly, many of our peers go there everyday, whether it's for school at the Performance Learning Center, a meeting, or as a regular after-school hangout. With that said the needs that my former commissioners identified many years ago as essential for Hampton's youth are being fulfilled at the Teen Center. Their input was vital for plans made then just as our input is critical as the City moves forward. So we are asking you to continue to include us in any decisions involving the Teen Center's future because without our input, the complete picture of what we need and want will not be fully represented. Thank you for your time and consideration.

The Mayor reiterated that everyone can sign up to speak at the budget hearing up until 7:00 PM. She stated it looks like it will take us longer than the allotted hour to get through all the speakers. We'll take all 24 of the speakers who signed up to speak before we start the regular meeting.

Mr. Kenny Taylor, President of the Hampton Volunteer Fire Company, made the following statement: I've been on the strategic planning group and was the co-chairman for the City fire department. As you all well know you've heard a lot from me over the past on the staff and now the new fire station, and the career and the volunteers went together because we felt like it was important to support that. I'm here to thank you for the support that you've given us. We went through a process with City Manager Bunting where the career leadership, the volunteer leadership, the chief, the deputy chief, sat down in a room, and it was a pretty difficult discussion, but we got through it. We told our side of the story. The City Manager appreciated our side of the story and I guess through all your efforts you were able to fund those positions. The reason why I'm here is after reading about the two cent reduction in the tax rate I am concerned about the effect it may have on the Fire Department. I know I've got assurances from all of you that it won't, but my real fear not only as a Fire Department person but as a business owner is this late hour with this proposal for a two-cent tax reduction. The two cent reduction may end up affecting the Fire Department. The work we do is important. We need the station to be staffed fully. We need to keep all our units in service and I ask that you approve the budget as it is. I mean it's important to do this and as a business owner, I hate to get up here and talk about a business, but I've been here since 1973 as a business owner and I have a concern that when I see Hampton's partners are thrown in the newspaper, Hampton University, NASA, and all that at the last hour without being consulted about that. I think it should have been a process before we start reducing their funding. They are our partners. If we lose NASA, we lose Hampton University. We don't have a whole lot but bedroom community. As far as a business owner, two cents is not going to bother me. It's the worst three years I've ever had, but I know the City has had three bad years. I'm in favor of your budget as presented. I don't mind paying the taxes. You didn't go up on it and I'm willing to tough it out like you all are, and I appreciate the good work that you've done. I especially appreciate City Manager's Bunting's good work. I think when we start evaluating things for whether they make a



profit or break even such as the Woodlands, we need to start evaluating things like the bus service and the Darling Stadium, and all these things are part of what makes Hampton the most livable City in the area, in Virginia, or in the country. So I think we have to be careful how we use profitability as a benchmark of whether we fund it or not. I would hate to see the Woodlands or any of these activities go away because there is not a lot for some of the young kids to do, and when I go by there there's a lot of kids playing golf. So I'm in favor of the budget as it is. I hope the funding will stay for the Fire Department, but I also hope that we can keep all these other things, and I'm in full support. If I have to pay the taxes, I'm with you. So that's all I have. Thank you.

Mr. Robert Doggett, 357 Shelly Court, made the following statement: I'm a long-time resident of the City, but I guess my pedigree is somewhat suspect since I didn't attend Hampton High School. I appreciate the opportunity to share my views with you tonight. I raise an opposition to the budget revisions recently proposed by Councilman Tuck. I don't see how such significant and obviously controversial items can be given careful deliberation they deserve at this 11th hour in the budget process. Because of my limited time, I'll only address the closing of the Woodlands Golf Course. My written remarks included discussion of the proposed tax – real estate tax decrease as well. Mr. Tuck proposed that the Woodlands Golf Club of course be closed and sold. I suspect he is thinking we have the profit of being sold to a real estate developer as opposed to a private entity that will continue to operate the golf course. Mr. Tuck says that in fiscal year 2010, the cost to operate the course was almost \$819,000 against revenues of slightly more than \$696,000 or a shortfall of a little more than \$122,000, a lot of numbers to digest. I don't have any trouble with these total figures, but they do differ from budget document to budget document. Mr. Tuck states further that this shortfall was covered by a transfer from the General Fund. I don't doubt that some transfer of funds was required and actually made, but I have not been able to confirm that transfer of \$122,000 was made by examining either the fiscal year 2011 actual budget or the fiscal year 2012 proposed budget documents made available to me at the public library. I wonder if a portion of this shortfall has something to do with depreciation of property and/or equipment and the amount of subsidy actually provided to the Woodlands Golf Course was considerably less than the \$122,000. A transfer of \$630,000 was made to the Hampton's Golf Course. A lot of money to be saved there while one needs to suggest that it could be closed. Of course no golf course should be closed and sold. They are like parks, libraries, and museum. How much money did Sandy Bottom Nature Park bring in last year compared to our golf course? Maybe you want to close it down? How about Gosnold's Hope Park? How about the recreation center? They pay their own way? The Tennis Center, it goes on. These types of services are supposed to help you maintain health and vitality. About 45,000 rounds of golf were played at the Woodlands Golf Course, mostly senior golfers. That's the best golf course for senior players on the Peninsula and among the best in the entire Hampton Roads. Instead of thinking about closing it, we ought to be nurturing it and publicizing it. In my written comments, I'll tell you I don't like the real estate tax decrease. I don't think it's a good idea. Closing or selling a golf course is an even worse idea and hopefully the majority of you will agree with me. Thank you.

Mr. Frank Ottofaro, 63 Wheatland Drive, greeted the Mayor, members of Council, Ms. Bunting and Ms. Hudson, and made the following statement: I'm here tonight to address the Council on the taking of my property at 11 Pine Chapel Road for the Power Plant. I demand/request an answer from you Mayor Molly Ward on why my property was taken. I would like a letter from you on how we can resolve this terrible injustice that was done

to me and my family within 30 days. This problem has to come to an end. I expect my City government and Councilmembers to do the right thing to straighten this problem out by paying me the rest of my money that was stolen by the former City Attorney A. Paul Burton and former City Manager George Wallace, why I was not paid two and a half times of \$164,000 set by appraisal of my property that was ordered by the former City Attorney A. Paul Burton. Why did the City of Hampton pay the other property owners two and a half times, three or four times the assessed rate? I wasn't paid just compensation for my property like the other property owners. The main thing was I wasn't supposed to be taken out. I was told by the former City Manager I wouldn't be taken out. Ross Kearney was against it. Why was it allowed? The City also just destroyed very nice Black upscale homes in the CC Spaulding Drive area. I, Frank Ottofaro, was discriminated against, my constitutional rights were violated by the City of Hampton. I did not cause this mess. Our former City Attorney, our former City Manager, all those – and City government lied the way I was taken out. I do not want to put any more cost of legal expense to the citizens or to myself in this fight. I expect the City to own up to the wrong that's been done to me and my family. My motto is, do not treat me no better or any worse, but treat me fairly equal. Discrimination of any form is evil. It kills the human spirit. I got cost -- Maguire Wood spent \$84,565 on me to take me out. Here's the cost right here of legal fees for the City of Hampton. You spent almost \$1 million that year in legal fees. You don't have money for Woodlands Golf Course. You don't have money for the museum. These things we should have. I've been paying taxes in this City for 52 years and I shouldn't be treated this way. I ask for a meeting with City Council.

Ms. Rhonda Scales, 102 Montrose Drive, greeted the Mayor and Council and made the following statement: I am here as one of the owners of the Covenant Care Home Health Agency. We are one of the tenants at the Hampton University Business Incubator. I just wanted to give you a face to go with some of the tenants that are in the building. We are in our second year of operation at the incubator. We're in what is survival mode as many of you know from starting small businesses. The incubator space has been invaluable to us in maintaining our operational cost. We employ fifteen employees, more than eight of them are Hampton residents. We currently have fourteen patients on our roster and a little bit more than a third of them are also in the City of Hampton. We purpose to be in the Hampton area, not only because my partner and I are both residents of the City, but also because we wanted to be able to serve the VA and the residents of Hampton. We also strive to use all businesses in Hampton, all of our vendors, all of the suppliers that we use are in the City of Hampton. So I just wanted you to know that not only does the incubator help to house entrepreneurs, but those entrepreneurs also reach out to the businesses in Hampton. Thank you.

Mr. F.C. Sorrell, 118 Stonehurst Drive, made the following statement: I am President of the Hampton Senior Golf Association, which is a group of 40 grumpy old men between the ages of 60 and 93 that play regularly at the Woodlands Golf Course. We have since 1975. By the way, our 93-year-old is here in attendance tonight up there in the second row. Some of us are the same people that came before City Council about 40 years ago, the last time the City had plans to do something with the golf course property. Ample notice was given about that prior to when all that was going to happen. The Council Chambers was filled. The halls were filled. The steps out on to the sidewalks were filled and the result was the rejuvenation of the Woodlands Golf Course as we know it today. It was closed for about three or four years, but it came back as what it is today. I was going to ask our people to stand, but I think they've already stood one other

time but they are still here and a few more came in. I would also think that if we would have had a little bit more notice rather just learning about this yesterday, you would have had a heck a lot more people here and the halls would have probably been full this time too. We're here tonight to voice strong opposition to the ill-advised proposal to close the Woodlands Golf Course. The Woodlands Golf Course presently is blessed with a very strong management team. It's made a lot of progress in recent years in the cost of operation and still providing good service to the golfers over there. I think it's the sincere hope of every golfer. I know the ones that I have talked to and I would suspect a lot of wives would feel the same way that this proposal would be soundly defeated by the Council. Now is the time to support our citizens to vote no to this proposal.

Mr. Neal Lineberry, 102 Wythe Crescent Drive in old Wythe neighborhood, made the following statement: In 1971 to 1974, David Montague was our Mayor. At that time, the City owned the property that is today the Woodlands Golf Course. If we hadn't approached David at the time we did – we had a little poker group. We were playing poker at his house, Wayne Jackson and I together, cornered him and convinced him that we needed a golf course in Hampton, not a housing project. He went to bat for us. Ex-Mayor Anne Kilgore was on the Council at that time. She said, "I'll go along with it if you build tennis courts." Her husband is an excellent tennis player. Now, we are old. You have to be 60 to be in our group. We have a 93-year-old, an 87-year-old. I'm 86 and when we go out there together, we get our recreation and a little bit of exercise, but we enjoy being there together and just so happy to be able to get out on the golf course. Three days a week we play there. We used to walk, but I guess I have to pay now to ride. It's a pleasure, we have a beautiful lady that manages that place and she does an excellent job. We're all proud of it. Councilman Tuck, I'd like to address you on this issue. If you are successful in closing down the Woodlands, what's your next non-profit project? The tennis courts, the baseball fields, et cetera, et cetera. Would there be an end to that because you think it's costing too much. We are paying the taxes and I tell you I'm proud of what you folks do and I'm proud of our manager. We have a beautiful City. I am so proud of it and if any of you folks haven't been through the Hampton History Museum, shame on you. I'm not going to take anymore of your time, but I implore you don't even consider what's being proposed.

Mr. Frank Edgar, 84 Algonquin Road, made the following statement: I've been 45 years in that same house, a beginner house when we decided we won't move. I'm trying to stay young because they say that I'm a learner, but the Hampton Golf Course in the Woodlands is one terrific facility that this City offers all citizens, not just the seniors. We have the women. We have younger people and all of it is provided, but keep in mind we pay some of the cost to keep that going. We pay through our tee time and the dues that we pay there, plus we pay our taxes for the City of Hampton. I hope that you will and Mr. Tuck reconsiders his recommendations. Thank you.

Mr. Steve Hagwood, 6 W. County Street, greeted the Mayor, Vice Mayor, Councilmembers and citizens of Hampton, and made the following statement: I come to you as a tenant of the Hampton University Incubator as well as a community partner. I won't inundate you with a long speech. I would just like to leave you with some stats that the incubator has contributed to the tax base and the small business community of Hampton. I've been a partner with the incubator since 2000. Since 2000, the incubator has had over 100 entrepreneurs that have come to its door. Those businesses, those entrepreneurs have created over 250 jobs. I dare to say at this point in time there are a lot of initiatives to actually create jobs out here, Statewide and Federally. Since 2004,

we've also had 60 entrepreneurs to actually come through the incubator to actually receive loans. Some of those persons are here tonight. Ms. Karen Shields and Ms. Rhonda Scales have actually come to CCDI. We partner with the incubator. I have assisted Ms. Scales. I assisted Ms. Shields with actually getting a loan to the City Hampton through the Industrial Development Authority (IDA) loan program as well as the incubator has assisted them with getting their documentation together to actually move forward with applying for that loan as well. We've also assisted other businesses such as Unique Imaging Solutions in Hampton. They received a \$500,000 loan through the City of Hampton's IDA loan program. Myself and the incubator assisted them with preparing their documents to actually receive that loan. We also have another gentleman, Mr. Quincy Martin, who is preparing to move forward with applying for a \$50,000 loan through the IDA program as well. Thanks for those that are requiring these individuals to actually have the business plan and training through the incubator. I provide those services to those entrepreneurs as well as with the help of Mr. Locke, who also does hands-on technical assistance with these entrepreneurs. Since 2004, CCDI does the businesses that have come to the incubator. They have contributed over \$1.8 million in tax revenue to the City of Hampton. That's by having their businesses located in the City of Hampton and creating jobs. That's only \$10.00 an hour living wage and over 280 hours a year. Also, we also provide training twice a year at the incubator for those individuals again who are applying for loans or those individuals who just need some sort of sustainability for their business. So I say to you cutting the budget that would affect the incubator would be a detriment to the small business community as well as the citizens of Hampton. Thank you.

Mr. Patrick Uribes, 1 Chickamauga Pike, greeted the Mayor, Vice Mayor, members of Council, Ms. Bunting, and Ms. Hudson. I'm scared. I teed off and drove in with those grumpy old men before in the Woodlands. Believe me you don't want them roaming the streets. Keep them on the golf course. I come before you this evening because you may be asked later to entertain a motion for reduction in the real estate tax. First I must state that I am not against tax reductions by any stretch of the imagination. Although they make fantastic fodder for constituents, I am certain you are aware that careful thought, study, and planning must take place to ensure that whatever is sacrificed to pay for that reduction actually makes sense. In only the past day or two, we have learned that with this recommended reduction comes a target placed squarely on the back of the Woodlands Golf Course. Although its income this past year in terms of direct profit was not a bottom line dream or so it has been reported, myself and many others in our City believe that Woodlands intrinsic value lies in what it brings to its locale, quality of life, acres of green space, and immeasurable collateral business and tax revenues if it's purely dollar signs that are driving a strain just to name a few. Additionally, what is wrong with putting together some smart heads on the Woodlands business case and turn it into a revenue-generating source. That seems to me to be a better idea than running away from a problem and I've heard from a few folks who have some great ideas. It could be said that I spent a little bit of time downtown at leisure, but I've also volunteered a significant part of that time working to improve the area for residences, businesses, and visitors alike. Believe me I feel more than qualified to make the statement that the Woodlands Golf Course is a definite benefit and asset to both downtown Hampton and Phoebus. It is definitely one of the reasons I was attracted to move a business downtown and one of the reasons I remain engaged there. All spring and summer long and pretty much on a daily basis you'll find golfers dining and relaxing and making excuses about their performance nearby to the Woodlands. You'll find this activity at the restaurants. Visiting boaters who enjoy a round of golf don't have to pay

an enormous cab fare or a car rental to drive a distance to get to a course, adding yet another nearby activity to invite and entice visitors to return and spend their leisure dollars in Hampton. Business and weekend visitors at local hotels and extended stay facilities are able to showcase another reason to stay downtown. So with just those few examples I brought forth, I hope you can see why an endeavor that would require us to forfeit a valuable asset such as the Woodlands requires – no I should say demands very careful thought, study, and planning. So I urge you all here to deny any such motion made on the back of the Woodlands Golf Course, and thank you for this opportunity to speak tonight. Good evening.

Mr. Edwin Boone, 48 Snow Street, made the following statement: I went to a festival last Saturday at Buckroe Beach. The festival was great, crowded, fun, and lacking something very important – parking. We now have a perfect example of some members of the Council with no insight. They went forward with the Parade of Homes against the wishes of over 7,000 Hampton voters. Did you know that 15,000 people went to Buckroe Beach to celebrate Labor Day in 1902 and that was without a \$150 million convention center? People came from Richmond by the trainload. Folks still come rather than cross the bay from Virginia Beach. Now we have condos and houses on one of the last pieces of land fronting the Chesapeake Bay. What kind of planning is that? You want to see some tax dollars come into Hampton. How about putting some light commercial on those vacant end lots along with some additional parking? The Buckroe neighborhoods were swamped last Saturday with people parking in front of the private homes. Is that fair? These folks have been taxpayers for a long time. Can you imagine how many tax dollars would have been made in one day if light commercial were on those end lots? Housing puts a strain on schools, police, and fire departments. Light commercial doesn't. Buckroe rocks from May to October. How often does the convention center rock? Unfortunately, the City wants to build a courthouse for umpteen million dollars in the middle of a recession and add to the City debt load. These decision-makers are not paying this bill. The taxpayers are paying the bill and taxpayers need a break. That courthouse can wait a year or two and I certainly hope if that courthouse is built that there are some solid points put into the contract that local folks get much needed jobs. Hampton's contracts certainly are not in favor of the folks that pay the bills. Taxpaying voters are watching. They are keeping track of the Council votes. If they don't like what they are seeing, they will seek some new faces. We have a year to go. I remind you the taxpaying voters are watching. I want these comments put into the minutes in it's entirety as they were written. Also I want to mention since I've been sitting there listening and looking, I'm the only one that goes to the Purchasing and Procurement Oversight Committee. We need folks involved. We're fighting over the golf course, the incubator. Those are small compared to the \$400 million and so budget that the City has. We all have jobs and live in the City. They come here. They do the capital improvement projects, but none of the citizens are getting into it. That's where your money is going. We don't need it. We're talking about no \$100,000 here or \$5,000 or \$50,000 there. We got a \$400 million budget and all the money is going to outside contractors outside the City. We need to keep the money here. If we don't have any more control over capital improvement projects, shut the capital improvement projects down.

Ms. Sharon Durette-Hunt, 1 Kirkwood Circle, made the following statement: I'm here on behalf of the Hampton University Incubator. It has been brought to my attention that you plan to recommend pulling funding from the Hampton University Incubator. I believe this would not be beneficial to the City of Hampton. I can attest to this action because I

started my business at the Hampton University Incubator. I have personal knowledge about the value this institution brings to small businesses and the value it adds to the City of Hampton and growing revenue. In December 2004, I incorporated my business and moved into the Hampton University Incubator. As an individual with an MBA and 21 plus years of military experience, I had already done the homework and understood why many small businesses fail in the first two years. I viewed the Hampton University Incubator concept as another layer towards my success. Yes, there are many reasons for business failures, but the incubator concept lessens a few such failures as insufficient capital, over-investment in the fixed cost and lack of experience by providing shared space and additional education. The incubator concept was elementary to me and I thought what a brilliant idea on the part of Hampton University and the City of Hampton to invest now for a future return on investment. It is no different than parents paying for their children to attend college, so they will be able to take care of themselves and perhaps the parents one day. The concept of the incubator that was beneficial to me was it allowed me to afford a small space while still having access to a conference and training room. This alone is invaluable to a business that these seldom spaces are used were shared along with the cost. This cut down the overhead cost and set a stable path to success. In addition to the shared access and shared expense, it brought in small business training with professional people such as the Small Business Administration (SBA) and finally the access to and support of other small businesses in this small community under one roof which brings networking opportunity, which we all could use, which can be a key to a business success. Now, I recognize that many times people who do not have their own businesses cannot get their arms around just what it really takes to build a successful business. Now, having said that I can tell you that it's very hard yet rewarding. Again that little extra support that the incubator provides is instrumental and goes a long way. My first consulting contract while at the Hampton University Incubator was \$2,500. I can proudly say my business has grown significantly from those days, but I would be remiss if I did not speak up and try to help another small business get the same head start I had by benefiting from the incubator concept. I am no longer at the Hampton University Incubator, but my business is still in Hampton. Not only does my company bring revenue into the City of Hampton, but I use my experience to help other businesses succeed. The taxes I pay could be put into the return in investment formula, but the aid I have provided to other companies cannot be measured, but at the same time the City benefits. What I'm asking you to do is the same thing I am asking the State and Federal government to do and that is don't start with the low-hanging fruit of education reduction because its immediate value cannot be readily measured.

Ms. B.K. Allen, 1047 Porte Harbour Arch, greeted the Council, the Mayor, City Manager and City Attorney, and made the following statement: I am here to talk to you about something fun and very successful, I believe. It's Arts in the Parks sponsored by the Buckroe Improvement League. The second annual Arts in the Park is on June 11 at the Buckroe Park. We have live entertainment, classical music in the morning, which is going to be something very new for Buckroe. We have more live entertainment in the afternoon. Within the ABC tent we will have many military individuals helping us make this a successful event. We have four times the artists that we had last year. We have community involvement with booths. We have food and to let the public know our artists are coming from as far away as Laurel, Maryland and Ripley, West Virginia this year. We have really attracted a broad spectrum of people. There is no duplication within our artists, which is really cool. Even though we have four jewelry designers as part of the event, none of them use the same medium, which is very nice. The proceeds from the

ABC area will go to benefit House of Hope, which is a Hampton-based non-profit; Wounded Warriors and Wounded Wear. Wounded Wear is the least known non-profit in the area and they provide such things as silk pajamas for our wounded coming back to be treated. They also provide tailored clothing for those individuals so that they can be happy about how they look and have clothing that fits. I want to invite each and every one of you. I want to invite the whole community to please come and support this lovely event. Thank you.

Mr. Steven Brown, 81 Michaels Woods Drive, greeted the Mayor, Vice Mayor, City Councilmembers, Ms. Bunting, and Ms. Hudson. I stand here tonight on behalf of the Citizens' Unity Commission and just wanted to speak to you a little bit about the work that they do. I've had the privilege of serving as chair of that commission for two terms and serving two full-year terms until I was termed out. I want to tell you that the Citizens' Unity Commission did not start as an ad hoc group. It actually started around a conversation we had about race in our City many years ago. I happened to be one of the progenitors of that particular conversation. At that time it was called Study Circles and it amalgamated into a City department named the Citizens' Unity Commission. I want to tell you that the commission has done outstanding work, with 1999, 2000, 2002, 2005, 2007, and 2008 National League of City Awards for cultural diversity. No other Commission of its kind, except one I think in the country, exists. We have a jewel in our unity commission. Believe it or not Hampton has a great opportunity to keep respecting diversity, respecting people's culture, their religion, their origin. We have – one of our community plans initiatives is to be a healthy, diverse community. I can say to you that even the ad hoc committee, which is comprised of about fifteen citizens whom the citizens of Hampton believe will be honest, forthright, and can present the facts if an incident occurred. Unfortunately many years ago we had an incident of a particular shooting in this area of a young lady. At that time I think some of you may be on the Council, but the Unity Commission's ad hoc group was activated. It helped our community come together by presenting the facts and I want to report to my City and to my Council that there was not one building destroyed, one window broken, nothing burned down, Hampton survived because of a Unity Commission that was concerned about how people perceive our City. I tell you that this department has one of the lowest budgets in the City of Hampton at \$123,000 and each year they have been asked to reduce their budget. If you just considered the training they do for the Hampton police division, which is a fine division, we would say more than \$123,000. So there's a cost savings to some of the work they do that is brought to us. So I want to say to this Council I support your budget. I'm asking you to please not de-fund the Citizens' Unity Commission. There are a lot of citizens in our community who have served on that commission and even the neighborhood college, which is nationally – not the neighborhood college but the diversity college, which is nationally recognized. Many people and myself, I've graduated four times from that particular college in four different grids of training and education. So I'll say to each of you thank you for what you do, but we need to keep the Unity Commission intact. I ask that you will not support de-funding them and also support the budget as presented. Thank you, good evening, God bless you for the work that you do for our fair City.

Mr. Tony Caspariello, 104 Wilderness Road, made the following statement: I'm here tonight because of the rapid response, the precision team work, and the bravery of the Hampton Fire Department. I want to publicly recognize and publicly thank the Fox Hill Station and the fine crew with what they did this Monday morning. In the early morning hours, we had a major fire at my house. I also want to thank my neighbors, fine co-

workers, my wife and daughter at Langley, and the caring concerned staff and parents at Langley Elementary who hooked up my grandchildren with book bags and supplies that were all lost. We sit here and we clap for golf courses and we clap for tax cuts, all admirable. I want everyone here to clap for the firefighters that saved my house and might one day save yours. Thank you.

The Mayor stated Mr. Caspariello is the last citizen to sign up to speak in the public comment. She thanked so many people for showing up this evening. It's wonderful to see so many citizens engaged. We're going to take a few minutes break so we can transition to the next meeting. She stated there would be a brief break before the evening meeting begins.

### **Adjournment**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Molly Joseph Ward  
Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Katherine K. Glass, CMC  
Clerk of Council

Date approved by Council \_\_\_\_\_